Working with Behavioral Health Services

San Joaquin Behavioral Health Services has an excellent outreach program to keep some of the hardest to serve clients off the streets and protecting them from homelessness. Sometimes it means bringing clients to our shelter which allows mental health outreach workers to help clients in a stabilized environment.

Severe depression and serious health issues (two open heart surgeries and a pacemaker implant) forced Kelly out of her housing situation three years ago. She could very well have ended up on the streets and died there. Instead she was brought here. Kelly had never known homelessness and soon realized the loving and nurturing nature our staff has for the clients. Her shelter case worker and mental health advocate worked with her diligently to receive medical care, mental health care, and the assistance she needed to navigate the Social Security system. Even with all this help and direction, it has taken three years and several appeals for Kelly to be approved for Social Security Disability benefits.

The “system” can work slowly, even at times when the need is critical. In Kelly’s case no one gave up on her, and she considers the help received a “God Send”.

Why the community supports the Shelter

The family shelter is still in overflow mode. When someone calls and asks if we have rooms available he or she will be told “No, but we have sleeping mats available and space on the floor.” If they are not in need of emergency shelter, they will not show up. But for those having exhausted all other resources, having a mat on the floor beats the alternative of sleeping out on the streets.

We are the largest provider of emergency shelter in San Joaquin County. The only shelter open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and 365 days per year receiving clients without fear of being rejected. This community supports us because they understand shelter clients are experiencing perhaps the most devastating and fearful time of their life.

I give praise to the City of Stockton and the County of San Joaquin for partnering with us to care for the most vulnerable in this community. We are the first rung on the ladder (just above rock bottom) that reaches up to self-sufficiency. It is gratifying for me to know that even when someone so vulnerable as Kelly, in the article above, needs long-term shelter assistance—we can provide it. Near miracles are happening here every single day!

We can’t and we don’t do it alone. We do it with the help and support of this caring community. Sundra (below) sought shelter with her daughter and 4-month old grand-daughter.

“...it doesn’t take long to get a place or income started if you are persistent with getting up off your feet and accepting the kindness and help offered here.” - Sundra
TEN WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE SHELTER

1. MAKE A CONTRIBUTION monthly or otherwise
2. SHOP AT SHELTER THRIFT
3. DONATE new or slightly used items
4. REMEMBER A LOVED ONE with a charitable gift
5. MAKE A BEQUEST in your will—there are tax breaks!
6. ASK YOUR CHURCH or civic organization to place the shelter needs list in their newsletter
7. LEAVE A LEGACY. Contribute to the Endowment Fund ($1,000 or more)
8. VOLUNTEER—There are many individual and group projects which would suit your talents
9. ADOPT-A-ROOM: do a make-over of a family room (new flooring, paint, fixtures & bedding)
10. TOUR THE SHELTER and give us your feedback

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR APRIL 17TH

On April 1, 2014, I interviewed Rasberri, a 10-year-old who lives with her family at Stockton Shelter for the Homeless. She stays at the Family Shelter with her mom, dad, and 4-year-old sister Jacyera. The family was at the Winter Shelter in French Camp before being transferred to the Family Shelter.

Rasberri likes the fact that she is able to make new friends at the shelter. She enjoys the arts and crafts program as well as the large selection of books that are available for her to read. When asked about how she feels staying at the shelter she replied, “I can’t complain, it not bad - it’s good!”

She doesn’t think homelessness will ever disappear over time because everyone needs a place to go. She believes most people are homeless because they over-extend their stay with relatives or friends, when they don’t fully achieve their goals or when they just can’t make it. When Rasberri hears people speak negatively about homelessness, she simply states that it’s not nice to talk about other people.

Rasberri knows what she wants for her future. She wants to go to college at the University of Pacific and study to be a teacher. She intends to accomplish her goals with a great attitude, optimistic aura, and good manners. For Rasberri, there are no ifs, ands, or buts - she knows what she wants and will continue to learn everything she can on how to get there.

Riley Ramos is an 8th grade student at Venture Academy’s VISA Campus. He is 14-years-old and enjoys writing, technology, and spending time with friends. You can contact Riley to discuss this series at randrwritingco@gmail.com. This article is part of a series about the children at the Family Shelter.
Most people have a safety net consisting of a combination of savings, investments, home equity, available credit, family, friends, and/or church affiliations that get them through rough times. A few have exhausted these resources and some have no safety net at all. These are the people we serve at the Stockton Shelter.

The **STOCKTON SHELTER SAFETY NET TEAM** is made up of generous donors who have donated or pledged a yearly financial contribution of $500 or more to the Shelter. **THANK YOU** to the members of the Safety Net Team. Without your support, we would not be able to provide services to the homeless.

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KEEPPING FAMILIES SAFE

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Jewelry, Purses and Shoes
Women’s Clothing
Men’s Clothing
Children’s Clothing
Home Décor
Kitchen Utensils
Furniture
Books, CDs, and DVDs

MAJOR PROJECTS & COSTS
Room Remodeling (adopt-a-room) - $2,000 ea.
Computer, Monitor & Printer - $800
Update Security CCTV System - $2,500
Lawn Mower & 3 trimmers - $425

FOR THE FAMILY SHELTER
Back packs
New Sleeping Bags
Pillows and Blankets
Reading Glasses
Diapers & Baby Wipes
Bars of Soap
Financial Assistance